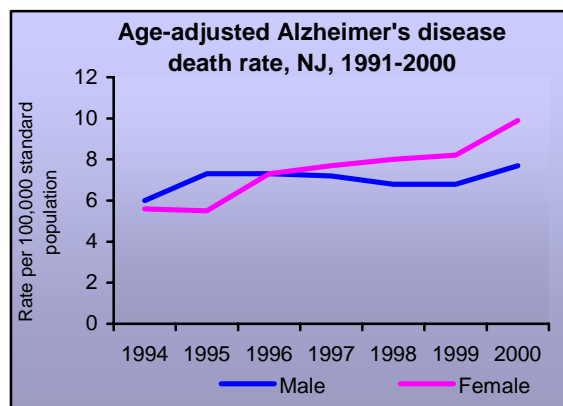




MONTHLY HEALTH DATA FACT SHEET November 2003

November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

- Alzheimer's disease (AD) is the most common form of dementia among older people and eventually leads to death. Dementia is a brain disorder that seriously affects a person's ability to carry out daily activities.
- In 2000, 1,267 New Jersey residents died due to Alzheimer's disease.



- Alzheimer's disease is listed as the 10th leading cause of death among New Jerseyans in 2000. Yet this is thought to be an underestimate resulting from both the failure to diagnose Alzheimer's and from a misjudgment about how the condition contributed to death.
- More than half of all people in New Jersey who die from AD are 85 years or older.
- The age-adjusted death rate for AD is higher for whites than for blacks (9.5 vs. 8.5).
- Since 1996, women have been slightly more likely than men to die from Alzheimer's disease, even after adjusting for differences in the age distribution of the two populations.
- White women are at the highest risk of dying from AD with an age-adjusted death rate of 10.2 per 100,000 population.
- Alzheimer's disease progresses slowly and patients may live from three to 20 years after diagnosis. Most typically, patients survive 8-10 years.
- Age is the major risk factor for Alzheimer's disease. Some other potential risk factors include genetics, hypertension, and high cholesterol.
- The only definitive way to diagnosis AD is to determine whether there are plaques and tangles in the brain tissue. This cannot be done until an autopsy is performed, so a diagnosis of AD is always considered "probable" based on medical history, neuropsychological tests, brain scans, and medical tests to rule out any other possible diseases.
- There are drugs that may prevent some symptoms from worsening for a short time for patients in the early and middle stages of AD. There are also some drugs to help control some of the behavioral symptoms of the disease, which can make patients more comfortable. There is currently no cure for AD.
- Research is currently being conducted on new treatments for AD. Some of these include anti-inflammatory drugs, vitamin E, selenium and estrogen.
- The New Jersey Division of Aging and Community Services, within the Department of Health and Senior Services, offers an Alzheimer's Adult Day Services Program for residents in need and who meet the necessary eligibility requirements.

- There are two chapters of the Alzheimer Association that are local for New Jersey residents with Alzheimer's and their families. They offer various services such as support groups, help lines, education and help fund current research.

For more data from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services: www.state.nj.us/health/chs

For more information on New Jersey's Alzheimer's Adult Day Care Program:

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/senior/alzheimer.shtml>

For more information on local chapters of the Alzheimer Association: <http://www.alz-delawarevalley.org/> (Southern counties) or <http://www.alznj.org/> (Northern and Central counties)

For further research: <http://www.alzheimers.org/>

For more information about National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month: <http://www.alz.org/>

For information on geriatric mental health services in New Jersey: <http://www2.umdnj.edu/~covne/copsa.html>

Sources:

National Institute of Health

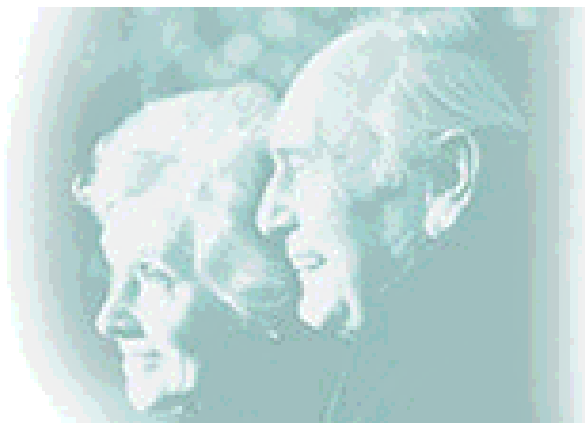
National Institute on Aging, [Alzheimer's Disease Education and Referral Center Clinical Trials](#)

New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services

[Division of Aging and Community Services](#)

[Center for Health Statistics](#), New Jersey 1994-2000 Multiple Cause of Death Files, unpublished data

[Alzheimer's Association](#)



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